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(54) **System for exchanging information in a battery mailbox**

(57) A system having a battery (30), a battery support unit (20), and an electronic device (80) provides for the exchange of information between the battery support unit and the electronic device via a mailbox (50) in memory (40) in the battery. When the battery is placed in the battery support unit, the battery support unit tests the battery for an error condition. If the battery support unit finds an error condition with the battery, it transmits error data (51) to a mailbox located in the battery's memory. When the battery is then removed from the battery support unit and placed in an electronic device, the electronic device can read the error data in the mailbox and take an appropriate action. For example, the electronic

device reads the mailbox and find the error data placed there by the battery support unit. In response to finding this error data, the electronic device enables an indicator (62), such as an indicator that informs a user that maintenance needs to be performed on the battery. The user can continue using the battery, knowing that its operation is likely to be unreliable, or can remove it from the electronic device and insert it into the battery support unit for maintenance. When battery maintenance has been selected, the battery support unit reconditions the battery by performing a predetermined number of charge/discharge cycles, and also performs additional testing on the battery.

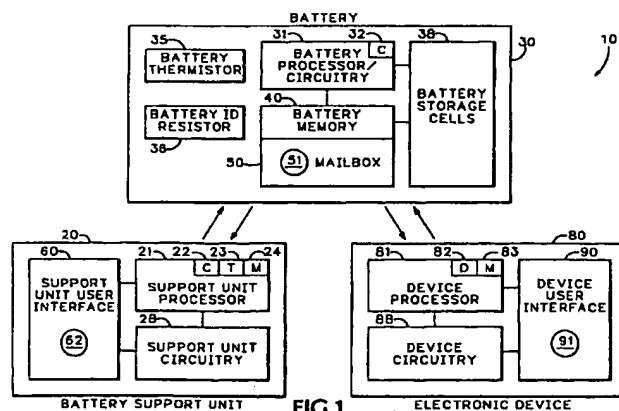


FIG.1



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# PARTIAL EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

which under Rule 45 of the European Patent Convention EP 96 30 3272  
shall be considered, for the purposes of subsequent  
proceedings, as the European search report

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.6)
X	EP-A-0 623 828 (ALSTHOM CGE ALCATEL) 9 November 1994 * abstract; claims 6-9; figures 2,3 * * page 2, line 49 - line 51 * * page 3, line 15 - line 18 * * page 3, line 26 * * page 3, line 43 - line 46 * ---	1-10	G01R31/36 H02J7/00 H01M10/48
X	EP-A-0 523 526 (SIEMENS AG) 20 January 1993 * abstract; claim 8; figures * * column 1, line 14 - line 15 * * column 1, line 34 - line 35 * * column 3, line 10 - line 25 * ---	1-10	
X	WO-A-92 22099 (MOTOROLA INC) 10 December 1992 * page 3, line 16 - line 18 * * page 7, line 8 - line 13; figure 4 * * page 8, line 34 * * page 9, line 1 - line 20 * ---	1-10	
	-/--		TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6) G01R
INCOMPLETE SEARCH			
<p>The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the provisions of the European Patent Convention to such an extent that it is not possible to carry out a meaningful search into the state of the art on the basis of some of the claims.</p> <p>Claims searched completely : 1-3,7</p> <p>Claims searched incompletely : 4-6,8-10</p> <p>Claims not searched :</p> <p>Reason for the limitation of the search:</p> <p>Claims refer to themselves or reference is obscure.</p>			
Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner	
BERLIN	10 February 1997	FRITZ, S	
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS		<p>T : theory or principle underlying the invention</p> <p>E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date</p> <p>D : document cited in the application</p> <p>L : document cited for other reasons</p> <p>.....</p> <p>&amp; : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</p>	
<p>X : particularly relevant if taken alone</p> <p>Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category</p> <p>A : technological background</p> <p>O : non-written disclosure</p> <p>P : intermediate document</p>			

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EP 96 30 3272

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.6)
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	
X	US-A-4 885 523 (KOENCK STEVEN E) 5 December 1989 * abstract; claims 1,2,10,11; figures 12,23-27 * * column 2, line 34 - column 3, line 7 * * column 3, line 53 - line 57 * * column 13, line 64 - column 14, line 12 *	1,7	
A	--- US-A-4 302 714 (YEFSKY SHELDON A) 24 November 1981 * abstract; figures *	1,7	
X	--- EP-A-0 622 863 (SONY CORP) 2 November 1994 * page 3, line 28 - line 40; figures 2,8 * * page 4, line 26 - line 29 * * page 8, line 2 - line 14 * * page 18, line 1 - page 19, line 35; table 7 *	1,7	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6)
A	--- DE-A-42 21 513 (SANYO ELECTRIC CO) 11 February 1993 * abstract; figures 2,3 * -----	1,7	

EPO FORM 150 (01/92) (P.O. 1/92)